

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 092119
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PARIS

UNCLAS STATE 092119

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, VN, US

SUBJECT: U.S. STATEMENT RE MIA'S

1. DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN MADE FOLLOWING STATEMENT APRIL 22.

2. BEGIN TEXT: ON MARCH 24, THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT AS A
RESULT OF THE SUCCESS OF THE VISIT BY THE WOODCOCK COMMIS-
SION TO HANOI, THE U.S. WAS PREPARED TO BEGIN TALKS WITH
THE VIETNAMESE IN PARIS ON THE NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS.
AS YOU KNOW THESE TALKS WILL BEGIN ON MAY 3RD AND ASSISTANT
SECRETARY HOLBROOKE WILL BE OUR REPRESENTATIVE. IN THIS
CONNECTION, THE MECHANISM ESTABLISHED BY THE VIETNAMESE AT
THE TIME OF THE WOODCOCK VISIT TO HELP RESOLVE THE MIA
ISSUE IS FUNCTIONING PRODUCTIVELY.

3. THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS SINCE THEN ON
THIS SUBJECT. I CAN TELL YOU TODAY THAT THE VIETNAMESE
INFORMED US YESTERDAY THAT THEY HAVE FOUND THE REMAINS OF
ANOTHER AMERICAN AIRMAN WHO HAD BEEN LOST OVER NORTH VIETNAM.
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WE HAVE NOTIFIED THE FAMILY, BUT UNTIL POSITIVE IDENTIFICA-
TION HAS BEEN CONFIRMED, WE PREFER NOT TO MAKE HIS NAME
PUBLIC. THE VIETNAMESE HAVE ALSO INDICATED THAT THEY ARE
CONDUCTING FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS ON THE CASES OF THE TWO
AIRMEN ABOUT WHOSE REMAINS THERE HAD BEEN MISTAKES OF
IDENTIFICATION, AND THAT THEY WOULD COMMUNICATE WITH US
FURTHER AS SOON AS ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE.

END TEXT.

4. ASKED IF THIS BRINGS THE TOTAL TO 13, SPOKESMAN SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THAT MIGHT BE CORRECT. IN RESPONSE TO OTHER QUERIES, HE COULD NOT GIVE ANY BACKGROUND AS TO WHEN OR WHERE THE MAN WAS LOST, AND DID NOT KNOW IF THE LOCATION OF THE REMAINS WAS THE RESULT OF INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE WOODCOCK COMMISSION. WHEN ASKED WHY THE DISPARITY IN NUMBERS BETWEEN THE 2550 MIAS AND THE 11 OR 12 BODIES RETURNED, HE REFERRED THE QUESTIONER TO THE MONTGOMERY AND WOODCOCK REPORTS ON THE SUBJECT.

5. NOTING THE STORIES ABOUT PEOPLE DETAINED IN VIETNAM, NYT'S GWERTZMAN ASKED IF THERE WAS CONCERN IN THE DEPARTMENT OVER THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN VIETNAM. THE SPOKESMAN HAD NOTHING ON THAT TOPIC AND AGREED TO TAKE THE QUESTION. HE COULD GIVE NO DETAILS ON THE US PARIS DELEGATION MAKEUP, AND SAID THE PRESIDENT HAD REFERRED TO SOME POSSIBLE SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION WITH THE VIETNAMESE WHEN ASKED IF HE HAD ANYTHING ON WHAT WOULD BE DISCUSSED AT PARIS BESIDES MIAS.

VANCE

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